

The Setting

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Most of these capital goods enter the village by gift or gift exchange. Some types (e.g. kitchenware and clothes) may pass from one village to another by way of brideprice, but other types of gifts (e.g. radios) are hardly ever made in a ceremonial context, but only to close kinsmen. I am not at all sure whether, in Salisbury's terminology, the latter type should be classified as a luxury or a ceremonial item.

One conclusion emerging from the various studies made in the 1960s is that total village income has risen rapidly among the Orokaiva. The sources vary. It may be due to outside employment of persons still ordinarily resident in the village, to increased cash cropping, to sale of food surpluses or to increased remittances from local men employed away from the village.

4. *History*

The main object of this section is to provide some background for the study of Orokaiva exchange, especially between tribes and between Orokaiva and Europeans.

In physical constitution, Williams considered the Orokaiva to be 'midway between the typical Papuan and the typical Melanesian'. Dupeyrat, who has recently (1965) surveyed the evidence, considers the Orokaiva 'basically of the Papuan Mountain type', but mixed with Polyno-melanesian elements, late-comers in Papua, who spread to the Northern District via Maisina and Manigela. It is certainly true that one notices more Polyno-melanesian features along the coast (e.g. among the Yega) than inland.

In the period just prior to European occupation, the most notable aspect of Orokaiva history that can be reconstructed is pressure from the dense population on the Mount Lamington foothills upon the sparser populations surrounding the mountain on all sides, but especially to the north and east. These sparser populations (to whom Williams gives the common name Sauaha) pressed upon the still sparser populations dwelling in the still less fertile country on their own northern and eastern borders (see Chinnery and Beaver 1916; Williams 1930: 152-4; Monckton 1921: Ch. XXIV; Crocombe and Hogbin 1963: 14-16).

In 1888, in response to Australian pressure, the British government annexed Papua. The first administrator, Sir William McGregor, made many arduous exploratory expeditions while establishing his rule in this vast unknown territory. On one of these expeditions he ascended the Mambare river to its highest navigable point, a few miles above Tamata creek, where he discovered the existence of gold in the sand and shores of the river (Monckton 1921: 78; Murray 1912: 326-8). This was the first discovery of gold in Papua with important commercial prospects, and led to a major movement of prospectors and miners to the Northern District. Relationships with the Papuans were bad from the beginning, and there were numerous killings by both sides. In 1900 150 miners were working on the Yodda river; the Yodda and Gira goldfields together produced 15,000 oz. of gold (Murray 1912: 333). In order to stop the bloodshed, resident magistrates were stationed at Ioma, along the Mambare and at two places on the Kumusi river, which was for some years the access route to the Yodda field.

The early relationships between Orokaiva and Australians may be gleaned

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175 from the three books of memoirs written by Monckton, who was resident
 177 magistrate in the district until his immoderate punitive expeditions led to his
 1726 being eased out of the service in 1907. His most memorable achievement was the
 building of a road from Buna through Orokaiva country to Kokoda, near the
 goldfields. This road, slightly modernised, is still the main line of communication
 in the Northern District today. By the time it was built (1904), the sanguinary
 battles between Monckton and the Dobodura and others had taken place, so
 government patrols were treated with much circumspection. Nonetheless the
 tribes around Mount Lamington were still 'fighting like Kilkenny cats'
 (Monckton 1922: 142). Monckton's comments on the road are interesting.

Yodda Road is talbu to the tribes and is traversed in perfect safety by single
 white men and their unarmed carriers. Never since I broke the Dobodura and
 Sangara has there ever been a theft upon it. It is a sanctuary for any and
 everyone; the wildest tribes only visit it in peace to trade food and goods to
 passing travellers. They rather like it, as small parties of hostile tribes can
 move freely about on it in safety with their women and children. (1934:41)

While the road was being built 'no hostilities took place between my working
 parties and the local inhabitants' (*ibid.* 63). It was thus described not only by
 Monckton, but also by Lieutenant-Governor Murray who wrote:

The Wasida and Sangara have been particularly active in forming markets
 along the road which leads from Buna Bay to the Yodda Goldfield, and in
 supplying carriers with taro and other food in exchange for articles of trade,
 such as tobacco and glass bottles, which are much prized for the manufacture
 of razors. (1912:105)

175 The Protectorate of British New Guinea became Australian territory by the
 648 passing of the Papua Act 1905 by the Commonwealth Government of Australia.
 The new administration adopted a policy of peaceful penetration and the
 Monckton type of massacres were not repeated. Nonetheless, these early
 excesses are now forever part of Orokaiva history. In the period that followed
 Papua presented 'in many ways an example of enlightened rule' (Mair 1948: Ch.
 III). Many measures of social and economic native development were intro-
 duced, though these invariably took the form of 'native regulations', for the
 breach of which a penalty was attached. The principle of coercion was applied
 over a remarkably wide and ever widening field.

From the days of McGregor, local control was in the hands of 'village
 constables, paid servants of the Crown. They were intermediaries between
 government and people, chosen by European officers.' From 1925 onwards,
 one or more 'village councillors' were appointed alongside the village constable.
 These were not paid servants of the Crown but were intended 'to be the
 representatives of native opinion'. In the Northern District I found they had
 generally been regarded as constables' assistants or subordinates. No indigenous
 officials had any judicial powers, as Murray felt such powers would lead to
 corruption.

In the period of Murray's rule (1907-40), the government's basic objective
 was to turn the Papuan into a keen and efficient indentured plantation worker.
 In that role, he was assiduously protected by measures which effectively

773 says that at the end of original time, warfare became an intrinsic part of social life. Two more specific messages emerge:

● [726] 1. The institution created by the thief was *isoro* (intertribal warfare) which was cogently distinguished by Williams (1930: 160-6) from *embogi* (inter-clan fighting). *Isoro*, as opposed to *embogi*, takes place between groups who are geographically fairly distant; are often the speakers of different languages or dialects, and who do not usually maintain close social relations. In *isoro*, but not *embogi*, men fight to kill and eat each other. The myth therefore provides a charter for an institution by which social groups are in permanent strife with one another and permanently seek to kill and eat each other.

2. The myth states that this trife, in particular, divides the people from up-hill and down-valley. I have already pointed out that the main immediate cause of warfare around Mount Lamington was pressure of population generated on the fertile foothills, which led to groups being driven downwards, while these groups in turn drove the valley people further and further from the mountain to less desirable territory.

773 829 The social philosophy expressed in this myth is therefore based partly on the observation of ecological realities. Given a fertile centre and an increasingly infertile, but practically boundless periphery, strife is indeed endemic between social groups because the centre will continue to develop a denser population than it can support, and will always be able to muster much bigger raiding parties than the sparsely populated hinterland. It may lose battles now and then but in the long run it must be able to drive its excess population downwards. Thus the opposing forces will tend to be placed, as the myth says, up-hill and down-valley. The historical facts, as reported by Chinnery and Beaver (1916), Monckton (1921, Ch. XXIV) Williams (1930: 152-4), and Crocombe and Hogbin (1963: 14-16), all suggest that valley populations such as Aiga, Sauaha and Dobudura originally lived near the mountain and were driven off.

829 So far, Orokaiva social philosophy looks notably like Hobbes' view of social life as it would be in a state of nature. Between the warring groups, certainly, there appears to be no justice or injustice, but only war, and 'force and fraud are, in war, the two cardinal virtues'. How can fiduciary social relations be established at all in a world of this kind? As we know, Hobbes argued that it could be done only by the establishment of central authority, a step the Orokaiva did not take.

773 [726] In order to present, as fully as possible, how the Orokaiva answered this question, I shall begin by quoting a myth told to me by Gideon of Hamburata, a village in the Saembata district.¹ I had asked Gideon to tell me the origin of feasts, then taped the reply and translated it from Orokaiva:

I shall tell you how feasting began.

Three men, after marrying wives, set out and settled by the root of a *barivo* tree. They had twelve children. When they had enough children, they built a house and founded a village. Then, deciding to leave, they made a feast by the root of that tree.

They all collected taro, made a platform, prepared all the food and got ready. Gasi, the last-born son, tied together his taro for the feast, intending

likely to emerge. Problems of work organization and income distribution may nevertheless arise. (1)

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Problems of work organization: The communal plantations almost all involved several unrelated descent groups which traditionally recognized no single leader. The Orokaiva did occasionally form larger ad hoc groups for warfare and sometimes for forest clearing, but these were temporary associations directed to the achievement of a short term goal. This of itself does not preclude the formation of new and larger groupings with unitary leadership provided there is either a strong desire for group action (and the necessary institutions to direct it), or strong external sanctions to enforce it.

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The earliest communal plantings of coconuts and rubber by the Orokaiva were carried out under instructions from officials and sufficient pressure was exerted to ensure compliance. The pressure was not, however, maintained and the coconut and rubber trees were little cared for after planting. Nor was harvesting for market enforced. Prices were low; the coconuts were seldom made into copra and the rubber was never tapped until the time of the war. (2)

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The working of the coffee planted under the Native Plantations Ordinance was strictly supervised. A village constable was in charge of each local group, the European officer in charge patrolled the area regularly, and defaulters were severely punished. The communities regarded the whole operation as one of oppression by the government. During the period that government sanctions were reduced and finally withdrawn, coffee prices were high (more than ten times higher than immediately pre-war). Many people therefore wished to continue working the coffee gardens, but the community was not traditionally equipped with adequate sanctions to ensure that individuals did their share of work, and the law specifically forbade the exercise of sanctions by any indigenous individual or group.

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(1) Since writing this we have been informed of a small (3 acre) communal tobacco-growing project which began at Soroputa in 1948 on the land of a single descent group. It was reported to have functioned efficiently until it was destroyed by the Mt. Lamington eruption in 1951.

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(2) For details of the war-time rubber-tapping scheme see Rimoldi, 1964.

Genesis of the Yega Scheme

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The term Yega Scheme has been applied by the Administration to the cocoa-planting enterprise undertaken by the Yega people at Ononda, four miles inland from Gona Mission.

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On several occasions prior to 1960, the Yega people discussed with the D.A.O., Mr M.H. Belfield, their desire to plant extensive areas of cocoa. Suitable land was not available near the coast, and it was not until early 1960 when an old pre-war road was reopened between Gona and Popondetta that access was provided to suitable forest country further inland.¹ In March 1960 Yega representatives advised the D.A.O. that land was now available and sought his advice and assistance in promoting cocoa production. The land available was mature rain forest situated about four miles inland, just north of Ononda Creek (see Fig.5).² This land was part of an area over which the Bowori clan of Yega had exercised rights until they were completely wiped out in inter-tribal fighting with the neighbouring Ahora people. Their land was never reallocated among the remaining Yega clans, but was used as communal hunting land to which no one Yega clan had any stronger claim than others. No complex pattern of clan rights applied in the area so there was no need for compromise among clans during the allocation of blocks.² Allocation of this land, whether for subsistence gardens or for cash cropping, was vested in the chief Yega land custodian, Nixon Kairembora, who fully approved of the cocoa project.

The land was inspected by the D.A.O. and pronounced suitable for growing cocoa. Investigations by the Department of District Administration showed that ownership of the area specified for the cocoa project was not disputed.

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Agriculture and administration officials tried to avoid some of the problems inherent in the Higaturu Council Land Registration Scheme (see Crocombe and Hogbin 1963:89-96) by suggesting that plantings be contiguous rather than in scattered plots of irregular size and shape. Contiguous planting would make all blocks

¹ The road was built pre-war by the Rev. Henry Holland and was used by the Japanese. Its reopening was mainly due to the efforts of the Anglican missionary in charge at Gona, Rev. E. Kelly.

² This exceptional circumstance and its bearing on the accord among clans which had prevailed, at least up to the time of writing, is relevant not only to studies of the Yega Scheme but also to the possible use of this scheme as a 'pilot' for future projects.

245 By a fortuitous circumstance, the land selected was regarded by all Yega as communal
423 hunting land. It had belonged in the past to
[614] the Bowori clan, but when they were wiped
[726] out in inter-parish warfare it had never been
re-allocated among the remaining clans. Nobody, therefore, had to be compensated for the loss. The Yega followed the DAO's advice
245 and over the next two years cut down a large
654 area of forest and planted shade trees and
657 young cocoa. In order to supervise this work, the Agriculture Department built a small village at Ononda to house a field instructor and a group of trainees.

245 Many people came to believe that their
433 future prosperity lay in the development of cash cropping. As the cocoa blocks were a long
361 walk (four miles) from their homes in Beporo
245 village, many decided to move inland; this was a rational decision. An additional incentive was the development of the weekly market
[484] at Popondetta. With the rapid growth of the
[443] town since 1960 there has been an increasing demand for fresh fruit and vegetables. Many
361 Yega have taken advantage of this to sell surplus produce for cash. Residence in the inland
443 settlements reduces the distance from the market. By 1964, over half the population was
438 living in the new villages.

361 In addition to the dispersal of population, the breakdown of traditional clan groupings
198 continued. The inland settlements are all numerically smaller than Beporo and in all of
614 them the old homogeneity of clan membership has disappeared. A man chose his house site for convenience and access to his place of work, rather than on the basis of his kinship ties.

361 The most radical change occurred in the establishment of Binjapada village. It is a collection of fourteen households, spread for over half a mile, along a narrow strip of grassland. Six of the occupants had been allocated
361 cocoa blocks in the near vicinity and four of
423 these men attempted to locate their houses on the projected extensions of their cocoa blocks; this represents the beginning of a dispersed pattern of settlement foreign to the Yega tradition of clan-based clusters of dwellings. As no boundary surveys were carried out, one man located his house on his neighbour's block.

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- 241 of "dry" gardening, with fire and the digging stick as the essential tools, and either long term rotation of previously occupied areas or breaking in of new forest land. "The immediate family . . . is a self sufficient unit" and "the Orokaiva words for 'work' and 'garden' are one and the same." Consistent with this mobile economic base, settlements are rarely more than hamlet size, with "hardly more than a dozen houses" on the average. Materials for housing are readily available, so that residence can be easily shifted.

(614) The hamlet is based normally on patrilocal-patrilineal principles of organization, with a known strong tendency for new groups to form by "hiving off." Clan affiliations are reckoned from quite recent ancestors, so that at times a given clan may all be in one settlement, though more usually scattered through several closely related settlements. The generally monogamous family units are under the "immediate authority of the father," while the affairs of the local living units are under loose supervision by the hamlet and clan elders, centered on a "men's house" and working together, usually with one strong senior man as "leader." Personal property consists of mobile goods such as tools and utensils, clothing, and body ornaments.

181 In spite of ethnic similarities over a wide region, Williams speaks of the Orokaiva as being a "more than usually quarrelsome and disunited people"—a strong statement to make in the New Guinea setting. Their pre-pacification history was marked by "feuds, dispersals . . . a veritable whirlpool of strife, migration, and counter-migration." Beaver, too, refers to their "turbulent and restless life . . . migration was, in the main, a matter of attacking, fleeing, and pursuing." Supernatural weapons in the form of sorcery were especially feared. Even for Papuans, the Orokaiva proved to be unusually hostile and resistant to whites. Women were often seen accompanying the war parties, carrying food and weapons, and sometimes joining in fights. Williams goes on to say that while the "elementary small sympathy-groups" (the local kin and settlement units, and to a lesser extent the dispersed clan units) were tightly knit, their external relations were precarious. "There were peacemakings or truces, but the truce was always a fragile one, and no (settlement) lived in permanent security." "Hiving off" occurred sometimes as the result of a "quarrel and the fear of retaliatory magic," but more often it was "simply the lax method of horticulture which necessitates the clearing of many areas in succession, and sometimes a temporary settlement on a distant site." Another factor could have been food scarcities which tend to occur in exceptionally dry southeast winter seasons. During this period, north and west Lamington area is in a rainshadow zone, and people may have to scatter out to live on wild roots and fruits. The implication of this is that even the excision of the 4,000 persons from the Orokaiva group who were killed involved no extensive shattering of valued ties.

361 Williams and others judge that with the modern pacification, the Orokaiva have tended to disperse in even smaller living units than before. This appears to apply particularly to the relatively densely populated Lamington slopes, though, a few instances of larger aggregations approaching a village type also occurred, particularly as a result of Mission influence. Over against this greater dispersal, the people have